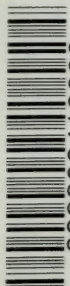


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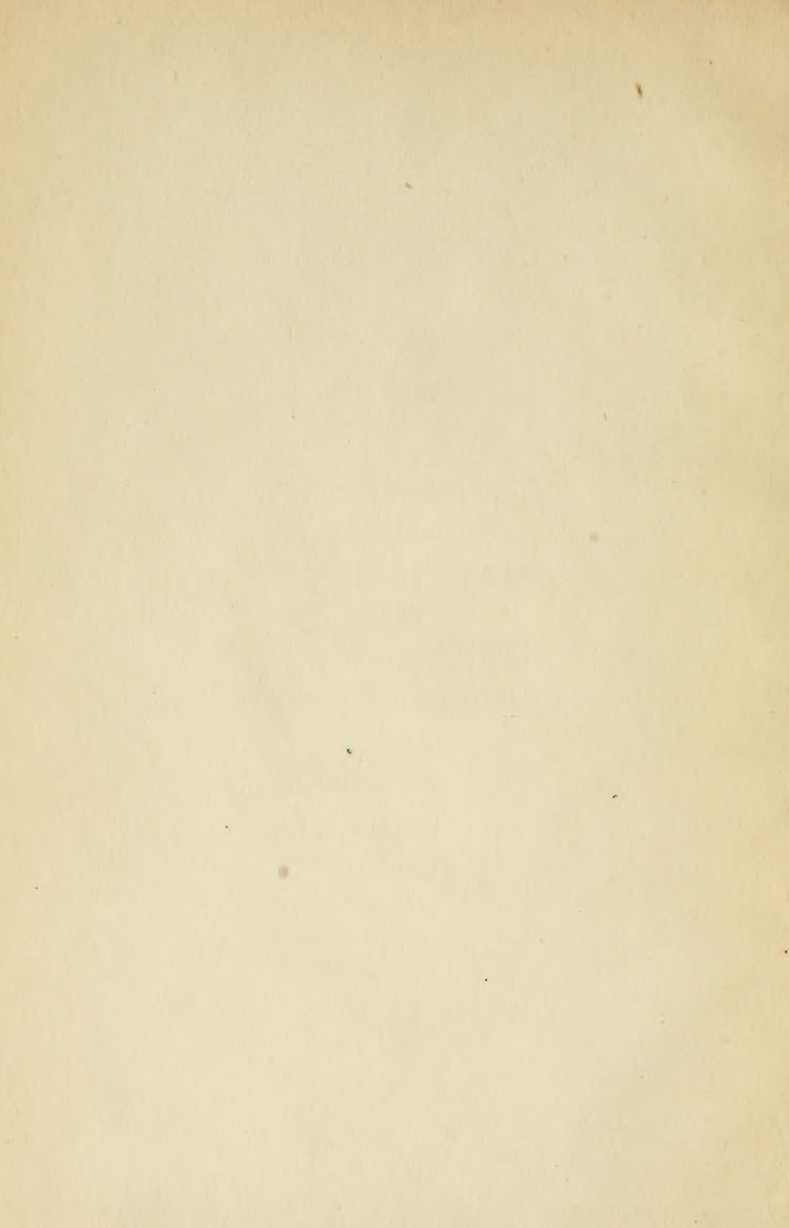
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JOHN · DRINKWATER



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THE WAY OF POETRY



W.P.—II.

‘From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing.’

Page 62.

Frontis.

THE WAY OF POETRY

BOOK II.

JOHN DRINKWATER



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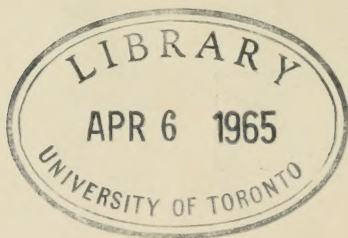
Mr W. H. Davies, for a poem from *Songs of Joy* (A. C. Fifield).

Mr Walter de la Mare, for a poem from *Peacock Pie* (Constable and Co., Ltd.).

Mr Ralph Hodgson, for two poems from *Poems* (Macmillan and Co.).

Mr Frank Sidgwick, for a poem from *Some Verse* (Sidgwick and Jackson).

The Executors of Robert Louis Stevenson, for two poems from *Collected Poems* (Chatto and Windus).



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INTRODUCTION

THE POET'S WORDS AND IMAGES

LAST year, when you were beginning to read these books, I tried to tell you something of the reason why poetry could give us so much pleasure, and do so much to enrich our lives and our ways of thought. I want now to talk a little about the way in which the poet does his work, so that you may begin to understand what lies behind the making of the poetry that we find so full of enchantment. And, again, I do not want you to puzzle too much over what I say, but just to read it carefully, and then from time to time go back to it, from the poems themselves, in the hope that it may gradually help you to form your own clear judgment about the things that you read.

And first, although it seems a very simple thing to say, it is important to remember always, that the material which the poet uses for his work is words. Words to the poet are what paint is to the painter, or stone or marble to the sculptor, or notes of sound to the composer of music. So that if a poet uses his words well, he needs no other help, while if he uses them badly nothing can be done to make his poem anything but worthless. Let us think what this means. Suppose a poet to be looking along a country lane on a dry autumn day, just when most of the leaves have fallen from the trees. Seeing the flock of many-coloured leaves driven along by the wind, his emotions are stirred, and he then feels the need of shaping the emotion into the clear shapes of poetry. And

to do this he has nothing but words for his purpose. So far as we are concerned, it is of no use for him to dance or wave his arms about in excitement, or rush along as though he too were a leaf driven by the wind. To do these things might in a certain way express his feelings, although it would be an expression of far less meaning than the exact statements of poetry,¹ but in any case they would mean nothing to us, since we should see nothing of them. So that what he has to record must be recorded in words and words alone. This, by the way, is the reason why it is so bad, when you are reading poetry aloud to people, to add to the words all sorts of gestures and facial expressions. The poet when he has finally chosen and arranged his words, if his poem is worth reading at all, has already said completely what he had to say, and if we add to his perfect expression this other feeble expression of our own, it is nothing but an impertinence, as though we were saying, 'This poet is not able to express himself very clearly, so we must help him out.'

Having now seen that words are what he has entirely to depend upon, we shall realise how necessary it is that the selection and arranging of words shall be his own doing and not as he remembers it to have been done by some one else. If the poet really sees that scene of the country lane and blown leaves with his own eyes and in his own heart, he will be so intent upon his personal experience that his mind will be absorbed in inventing a

¹ If, for instance, you had been with Wordsworth when he saw a rainbow, and he had suddenly stopped walking and pointed to it, drawing a deep sigh of pleasure, just as any one in thousands of men might do, you would have by no means realised his personal delight as intimately as you now do when you read his simple but complete words—

'My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.'

personal way of expressing that experience; he will, in fact, create, and it is just this creating that makes us create for ourselves when we read his poem, and so gives us so much precious delight, as I explained in your earlier book. But if his experience is a vague and incomplete one, his mind, instead of working vigorously to create for itself, will lazily turn away to remember what some one else has said about the same kind of thing, and since one mind can never repeat another mind's work perfectly, he will only manage a half-expression, a second-hand and cheating expression, and directly we understand anything about poetry we are able to see through this kind of deception at once, and we know that it is useless to us, and gives us no real pleasure at all. Because what happens in this case is that the poet only gets a vague expression to match his vague experience, and he makes it vague in our minds too, which is exactly what poetry must never do.

We may now see how a great poet treats the vision he had of the autumn wind and the leaves. Shelley wrote of it thus,—

‘O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red.’

You will notice at first how wonderfully he brings into our minds a vivid idea of that ‘unseen presence’ by making it stir into movement the *dead* leaves, which in turn he makes so real for us in their sharply contrasted colours—‘yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red.’ And then you will notice that he does more than this, which brings

me to another thing I want to tell you about the poet's way of working. He says that the leaves are scattered by the wind—

‘Like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.’

This is what is called an image, and to use an image is one of the most powerful ways in which the poet can make himself clear to us. Shelley was not writing about ghosts and an enchanter, but about leaves scattered before the wind. But the cloud of leaves, driven along in commotion, brought into his mind an image of huddled ghosts crowding before the enchanter who had power to drive them forth at his will. He set this vision down very simply in words, but perfectly,—

‘Ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.’

And then, although he had already conceived the idea of the leaves driven before the wind in words that could express it quite directly—‘thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead are driven . . . yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red’—he sharpens the whole picture in our minds by taking our thoughts for a moment to that other idea of the ghosts and the enchanter, and then telling us that the thing of which he is actually writing is *like* that other thing of which he is not actually writing. And this using of an image to make the impression of what he sees even clearer than it would have been by direct statement, however exact and lucid, is an act of the imagination, which word you see is built upon the word image.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

1919.

The Way of Poetry

BOOK II

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPRING

AND now all nature seemed in love;
The lusty sap began to move;
New juice did stir the embracing vines,
And birds had drawn their valentines;
The jealous trout that now did lie,
Rose at a well-dissembled fly:
There stood my friend with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.
Already were the caves possessed
With the swift pilgrim's daubed nest:
The groves already did rejoice
In Philomel's triumphing voice.
The showers were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smiled.
Joan takes her neat-rubbed pail and now
She trips to milk the sand-red cow;
Where, for some sturdy football swain,
Joan strokes a sillabub or twain.
The fields and gardens were beset
With tulip, crocus, violet;
And now, though late, the modest rose
Did more than half a blush disclose.
Thus all looked gay, all full of cheer,
To welcome the new-liveried year.

SIR HENRY WOTTON.

SPRING MORNING

THOMALIN

WHERE is every piping lad
 That the fields are not yelad
 With their milk-white sheep?
 Tell me: is it holiday,
 Or if in the month of May
 Use they long to sleep?

PIERS

Thomalin, 'tis not too late,
 For the turtle and her mate
 Sitten yet in nest:
 And the thrustle hath not been
 Gath'ring worms yet on the green,
 But attends her rest.
 Not a bird hath taught her young,
 Nor her morning's lesson sung
 In the shady grove:
 But the nightingale in dark
 Singing woke the mounting lark:
 She records her love.
 Not the sun hath with his beams
 Gilded yet our crystal streams:
 Rising from the sea,
 Mists do crown the mountain's tops,
 And each pretty myrtle drops:
 'Tis but newly day.

WILLIAM BROWNE.

I WILL MAKE YOU BROOCHES

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.

I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom.
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near:
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

MENAPHON'S ROUNDELAY

WHEN tender ewes, brought home with evening sun,

Wend to their folds

And to their holds

The shepherds trudge when light of day is done,

Upon a tree

The eagle, Jove's fair bird, did perch;

There resteth he.

A little fly his harbour then did search,

And did presume, though others laughed thereat,

To perch whereas the princely eagle sat.

The eagle frowned, and shook his royal wings,
 And charged the fly
 From thence to hie :
 Afraid, in haste, the little creature flings,
 Yet seeks again,
 Fearful, to perk him by the eagle's side.
 With moody vein,
 The speedy post of Ganymede replied,
 'Vassal, avaunt, or with my wings you die;
 Is't fit an eagle seat him with a fly?'

The fly craved pity, still the eagle frowned;
 The silly fly,
 Ready to die,
 Disgraced, displaced, fell grovelling to the ground :
 The eagle saw,
 And with a royal mind said to the fly,
 'Be not in awe,
 I scorn by me the meanest creature die:
 Then seat thee here.' The joyful fly upflings,
 And sat safe shadowed with the eagle's wings.

ROBERT GREENE.

EVENING SONG

SHEPHERDS all, and maidens fair,
 Fold your flocks up, for the air
 'Gins to thicken, and the sun
 Already his great course hath run.
 See the dew-drops how they kiss
 Every little flower that is,

Hanging on their velvet heads,
Like a rope of crystal beads :
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling
The dead Night from under ground;
At whose rising, mists unsound,
Damps and vapours fly apace,
Hovering o'er the wanton face
Of these pastures, where they come.
Striking dead both bud and bloom;
Therefore, from such danger lock
Every one his lovèd flock;
And let your dogs lie loose without,
Lest the wolf come as a scout
From the mountain, and ere day,
Bear a lamb or kid away;
Or the crafty thievish fox
Break upon your simple flocks.
To secure yourselves from these,
Be not too secure in ease:
Let one eye his watches keep,
Whiist the other eye doth sleep;
So shall you good shepherds prove,
And for ever hold the love
Of our great god. Sweetest slumbers,
And soft silence fall in numbers
On your eyelids ! So, farewell !
Thus I end my evening's knell.

JOHN FLETCHER.

NIGHT

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are cover'd warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping,
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.

But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying, 'Wrath, by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness
Is driven away
From our immortal day.

'And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep;
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep.
For, wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold.'

WILLIAM BLAKE.

LEISURE

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. DAVIES.

A WISH

Thus only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.

Some honour I would have,
Not from great deeds, but good alone,
The unknown are better than ill known;

Rumour can ope the grave.
Acquaintance I would have, but when 't depends
Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturb'd as death, the night.

My house a cottage, more
Than palace, and should fitting be,
For all my use, not luxury.

My garden painted o'er
With nature's hands, not art's: and pleasures yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

Thus would I double my life's fading space,
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.

And in this true delight
The unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear nor wish my fate,

But boldly say each night,
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have liv'd to-day.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

ROSE AYLMER

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
 Ah, what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

PAST AND PRESENT

I REMEMBER, I remember
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day;
 But now I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
 The roses red and white,
 The violets and the lily-cups—
 Those flowers made of light!
 The lilacs where the robin built,
 And where my brother set
 The laburnum on his birthday—
 The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

THOMAS HOOD.

A SISTER

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
 Those bright blue eggs together laid!
 On me the chance-discovered sight
 Gleamed like a vision of delight.
 I started—seeming to espy
 The home and sheltered bed,
 The sparrow's dwelling, which hard by
 My father's house in wet or dry
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
 Dreading, though wishing, to be near it;
 Such heart was in her, being then
 A little Prattler among men.
 The Blessing of my later years
 Was with me when a boy;
 She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
 And humble cares, and delicate fears,
 A heart the fountain of sweet tears,
 And love, and thought, and joy.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

OLD CROW

THE bird in the corn
 Is a marvellous crow.
 He was laid and was born
 In the season of snow;
 And he chants his old catches
 Like a ghost under hatches.

He comes from the shades
Of his wood very early,
And works in the blades
Of the wheat and the barley,
And he's happy, although
He's a grumbleton crow.

The larks have devices
For sunny delight,
And the sheep in their fleeces
Are woolly and white;
But these things are scorn
Of the bird in the corn.

And morning goes by,
And still he is there,
Till a rose in the sky
Calls him back to his lair
In the boughs where the gloom
Is a part of his plume.

But the boy in the lane
With his gun, by-and-by,
To the heart of the grain
Will narrowly spy,
And the twilight will come,
And no crow will fly home.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

DAFFODIL

BATTE

GORBO, as thou camest this way,
 By yonder little hill,
 Or as thou through the fields did stray,
 Saw'st thou my Daffodil?

She's in a frock of Lincoln green,
 Which colour likes her sight,
 And never hath her beauty seen,
 But through a veil of white;

Than roses richer to behold,
 That trim up lovers' bowers
 The pansy and the marigold,
 Though Phœbus' paramours.

GORBO

Thou well describ'st the daffodil;
 It is not full an hour,
 Since by the spring, near yonder hill,
 I saw that lovely flower.

BATTE

Yet my fair flower thou didst not meet
 Nor news of her didst bring,
 And yet my Daffodil's more sweet
 Than that by yonder spring.

GORBO

I saw a shepherd that doth keep
 In yonder field of lilies,
 Was making (as he fed his sheep)
 A wreath of daffodillies.

BATTE

Yet, Gorbo, thou delud'st me still,
My flower thou didst not see;
For, know, my pretty Daffodil
Is worn of none but me.

To show itself but near her feet
No lily is so bold, •
Except to shade her from the heat,
Or keep her from the cold.

GORBO

Through yonder vale as I did pass,
Descending from the hill,
I met a smirking bonny lass,
They call her Daffodil :

Whose presence, as along she went,
The pretty flowers did greet,
As though their heads they downward bent
With homage to her feet.

And all the shepherds that were nigh,
From top of every hill,
Unto the valleys loud did cry,
There goes sweet Daffodil.

BATTE

Ay, gentle shepherd, now with joy
Thou all my flocks dost fill,
That's she alone, kind shepherd boy;
Let us to Daffodil.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND

ABROAD on a winter's night there ran
Under the starlight, leaping the rills
Swollen with snow-drip from the hills,
Goat-legged, goat-bearded Pan.

He loved to run on the crisp white floor,
Where black hill-torrents chiselled grooves,
And he loved to print his clean-cut hooves,
Where none had trod before.

And now he slacked and came to a stand
Beside a river too broad to leap;
And as he panted he heard a sheep
That bleated near at hand.

'Bell-wether, bell-wether, what do you say?
Peace, and huddle your ewes from cold!
'Master, but ere we went to fold
Our herdsman hastened away.

'Over the hill came other twain
And pointed away to Bethlehem,
And spake with him, and he followed them,
And has not come again.

'He dropped his pipe of the river-reed;
He left his scrip in his haste to go;
And all our grazing is under snow,
So that we cannot feed.'

'Left his sheep on a winter's night?'
Pan folded them with an angry frown.
'Bell-wether, bell-wether, I'll go down
Where the star shines bright.'

Down by the hamlet he met the man.
'Shepherd, no shepherd, thy flock is lorn !'
'Master, no master, a child is born
Royal, greater than Pan.

'Lo, I have seen; I go to my sheep;
Follow my footsteps through the snow,
But warily, warily see thou go,
For child and mother sleep.'

Into the stable-yard Pan crept,
And there in a manger a baby lay
Beside his mother upon the hay,
And mother and baby slept.

Pan bent over the sleeping child,
Gazed on him, panting after his run;
And while he wondered, the little one
Opened his eyes and smiled;

Smiled, and after a little space
Struggled an arm from the swaddling-band,
And raising a tiny dimpled hand,
Patted the bearded face.

Something snapped in the breast of Pan;
His heart, his throat, his eyes were sore,
And he wished to weep as never before
Since the world began.

And out he went to the silly sheep,
 To the fox on the hill, the fish in the sea,
 The horse in the stall, the bird in the tree,
 Asking them how to weep.

They could not teach—they did not know;
 The law stands writ for the beast that's dumb
 That a limb may ache and a heart be numb,
 But never a tear can flow.

So bear you kindly to-day, O Man,
 To all that is dumb and all that is wild,
 For the sake of the Christmas Babe who smiled
 In the eyes of great god Pan.

FRANK SIDGWICK.

THE GREEN LINNET

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
 Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
 With brightest sunshine round me spread
 Of spring's unclouded weather,
 In this sequestered nook how sweet
 To sit upon my orchard-seat !
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
 In all this covert of the blest :
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion !

Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours.
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment;
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel-trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There ! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives —
A Brother of the dancing leaves:
Then flits, and from the cottage-caves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE OWL

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round :
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay :
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

NICHOLAS NYE

THISTLE and darnel and dock grew there,
And a bush, in the corner, of may,
On the orchard wall I used to sprawl
In the blazing heat of the day;
Half asleep and half awake,
While the birds went twittering by,
And nobody there my lone to share
But Nicholas Nye.

Nicholas Nye was lean and gray,
Lame of a leg and old,
More than a score of donkey's years
He had seen since he was foaled;
He munched the thistles, purple and spiked,
Would sometimes stoop and sigh,
And turn to his head, as if he said,
'Poor Nicholas Nye!'

Alone with his shadow he'd drowse in the meadow,
Lazily swinging his tail,
At break of day he used to bray—
Not much too hearty and hale;
But a wonderful gumption was under his skin,
And a clear calm light in his eye,
And once in a while, he'd smile—
Would Nicholas Nye.

Seem to be smiling at me, he would,
From his bush in the corner, of may,—
Bony and ownerless, widowed and worn
Knobble-kneed, lonely and gray;

And over the grass would seem to pass
 'Neath the deep dark blue of the sky,
 Something much better than words between me
 And Nicholas Nye.

But dusk would come in the apple boughs,
 The green of the glow-worm shine,
 The birds in nest would crouch to rest,
 And home I'd trudge to mine;
 And there in the moonlight, dark with dew,
 Asking not wherefore nor why,
 Would brood like a ghost, and as still as a post,
 Old Nicholas Nye.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
 I had no human fears :
 She seem'd a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
 She neither hears nor sees;
 Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

LAWN AS WHITE AS DRIVEN SNOW

LAWN as white as driven snow;
Cypress black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears :
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel :
Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry :
Come buy.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

OVER HILL, OVER DALE

OVER hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
 I do wander everywhere,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;
 And I serve the fairy queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green.
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be :
 In their gold coats spots you see;
 Those be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours;
 I must go seek some dewdrops here,
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

A SONG

A WIDOW bird sate mourning for her love
 Upon a wintry bough;
 The frozen wind crept on above
 The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

PACK, CLOUDS, AWAY

PACK, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount lark aloft
To give my Love good-morrow !
Wings from the wind to please her mind
Notes from the lark I'll borrow;
Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my Love good-morrow;
To give my Love good-morrow
Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, Robin-redbreast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each bill, let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow !
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
Sing my fair Love good-morrow !
To give my Love good-morrow
Sing birds in every furrow !

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY

YE Highlands and ye Lawlands,
 O where hae ye been?
 They hae slain the Earl of Murray,
 And hae laid him on the green.

Now wae be to thee, Huntley,
 And whairfore did you sae?
 I bade you bring him wi' you,
 But forbade you him to slay.

He was a braw gallant,
 And he rid at the ring;
 And the bonny Earl of Murray,
 O he might hae been a king!

He was a braw gallant,
 And he play'd at the ba';
 And the bonny Earl of Murray
 Was the flower amang them a'!

He was a braw gallant,
 And he play'd at the glove;
 And the bonny Earl of Murray,
 He was the queen's luvie!

O lang will his Lady
 Look owre the Castle Downe,
 Ere she see the Earl of Murray
 Come sounding through the town.

ANONYMOUS.

HELEN OF KIRCONNELL

I

I WISH I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell lea!

II

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

III

O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my Love dropp'd and spak nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

IV

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

V

I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

VI

O Helen fair, beyond compare !
 I'll mak a garland o' thy hair,
 Shall bind my heart for evermair,
 Until the day I dee !

VII

O that I were where Helen lies !
 Night and day on me she cries;
 Out of my bed she bids me rise,
 Says, 'Haste, and come to me !'

VIII

O Helen fair ! O Helen chaste !
 If I were with thee, I'd be blest,
 Where thou lies low and taks thy rest,
 On fair Kirconnell lea.

IX

I wish my grave were growing green,
 A winding sheet drawn owre my een,
 And I in Helen's arms lying,
 On fair Kirconnell lea.

X

I wish I were where Helen lies !
 Night and day on me she cries;
 And I am weary of the skies,
 For her sake that died for me.

ANONYMOUS.

I SAW THREE SHIPS

I

As I sat under a sycamore tree,
—A sycamore-tree, a sycamore-tree,
I looked me out upon the sea
On Christ's Sunday at morn.

II

I saw three ships a-sailing there,
—A-sailing there, a-sailing there,
Jesu, Mary, and Joseph they bare
On Christ's Sunday at morn.

III

Joseph did whistle and Mary did sing,
—Mary did sing, Mary did sing,
And all the bells on earth did ring
For joy our Lord was born.

IV

O they sail'd in to Bethlehem!
—To Bethlehem, to Bethlehem;
Saint Michael was the sterèsman,
Saint John sate in the horn.

V

And all the bells on earth did ring
—On earth did ring, on earth did ring;
'Welcome be thou, Heaven's King,
On Christ's Sunday at morn!'

ANONYMOUS.

LORD RANDAL

I

‘O WHERE hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
 O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?’—
 ‘I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed
 soon,
 For I’m weary wi’ hunting, and fain wald lie down.’

II

‘Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
 Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome young man?’—
 ‘I dined wi’ my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
 For I’m weary wi’ hunting, and fain wald lie down.’

III

‘What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
 What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?’
 ‘I gat eels boil’d in broo’; mother, make my bed soon
 For I’m weary wi’ hunting, and fain wald lie down.’

IV

‘What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my
 son?
 What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young
 man?’—
 ‘O they swell’d and they died; mother, make my bed
 soon,
 For I’m weary wi’ hunting, and fain wald lie down.’

V

‘O I fear ye are poison’d, Lord Randal, my son!
 O I fear ye are poison’d, my handsome young man!’—
 ‘O yes! I am poison’d; mother, make my bed soon,
 For I’m sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down.’

ANONYMOUS.

THE ELIXIR

TEACH me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee :

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action;
But still to make thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of thee partake :
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine :
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold :
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'TWOULD ring the bells of Heaven
 The wildest peal of years,
 If Parson lost his senses
 And people came to theirs,
 And he and they together
 Knelt down with angry prayers
 For tamed and shabby tigers
 And dancing dogs and bears,
 And wretched, blind pit ponies,
 And little hunted hares.

RALPH HODGSON.

ODE

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
 By all their country's wishes blest !
 When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
 Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod
 Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
 There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
 And Freedom shall awhile repair
 To dwell, a weeping hermit, there !

WILLIAM COLLINS.

AND DID THOSE FEET IN ANCIENT TIME

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

HE THAT LOVES A ROSY CHEEK

HE that loves a rosy cheek
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires;
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts, and calm desires,
 Hearts with equal love combined,
 Kindle never-dying fires :—
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

THOMAS CAREW.

TIME, YOU OLD GIPSY MAN

TIME, you old gipsy man,
 Will you not stay,
 Put up your caravan
 Just for one day?

All things I'll give you
 Will you be my guest,
 Bells for your jennet
 Of silver the best,
 Goldsmiths shall beat you
 A great golden ring,

Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may,
Time, you old gipsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein—
Only a moment,
And off once again;
Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.
Time, you old gipsy man,
 Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
 Just for one day?

RALPH HODGSON.

MAESIA'S SONG

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content;
 The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
 Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
 The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown :
 Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
 Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest;
 The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
 The mean that 'grees with country music best;
 The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare;
 Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss :
 A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

ROBERT GREENE.

WHAT PLEASURE HAVE GREAT PRINCES

WHAT pleasure have great princes
 More dainty to their choice
 Than herdsman wild, who careless,
 In quiet life rejoice,
 And fortune's fate not fearing
 Sing sweet in summer morning?

Their dealings plain and rightful,
 Are void of all deceit;
 They never know how spiteful
 It is to kneel and wait
 On favourite presumptuous
 Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth;
At night they take their rest;
More quiet than who sendeth
His ship into the East,
Where gold and pearl are plenty;
But getting, very dainty.

For lawyers and their pleading,
They 'steem it not a straw;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law :
Whence conscience judgeth plainly,
They spend no money vainly.

O happy who thus liveth !
Not caring much for gold;
With clothing which sufficeth
To keep him from the cold.
Though poor and plain his diet,
Yet merry it is, and quiet.

ANONYMOUS.

VERSES WRITTEN IN THE TOWER THE
NIGHT BEFORE HE WAS BEHEADED

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares;
 My feast of joy is but a dish of pain;
 My crop of corn is but a field of tares;
 And all my good is but vain hope of gain;
 The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun;
 And now I live, and now my life is done!

The spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung;
 The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green;
 My youth is gone, and yet I am but young;
 I saw the world, and yet I was not seen;
 My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun;
 And now I live, and now my life is done!

I sought my death, and found it in my womb;
 I looked for life, and saw it was a shade;
 I trod the earth, and knew it was my tomb;
 And now I die, and now I am but made;
 The glass is full, and now my glass is run;
 And now I live, and now my life is done!

CHILDIOCK TICHBORNE.

THE PERFECT LIFE

IT is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere;
 A lily of a day
 Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

BEN JONSON,

TIME GOES BY TURNS

THE lopped tree in time may grow again,
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower;
The sorriest wight may find release of pain,
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower:
Time goes by turns, and chances change by course,
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow,
She draws her favours to the lowest ebb;
Her tides have equal times to come and go,
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web.
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
 Not endless night, not yet eternal day :
 The saddest birds a season find to sing;—
 The roughest storm a calm may soon allay :
 Thus, with succeeding turns, God tempereth all,
 That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

A chance may win that by mischance was lost;
 The net that holds no great, takes little fish;
 In some things all, in all things none are cross'd,
 Few all they need, but none have all they wish;
 Unmeddled joys here to no man befall,
 Who least, hath some; who most, hath never all.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

DEATH

How weak a star doth rule mankind,
 Which owes its ruin to the same
 Causes which Nature had designed
 To cherish and preserve the frame !

As commonwealths may be secure,
 And no remote invasion dread,
 Yet may a sadder fall endure
 From traitors in their bosom bred,

So while we feel no violence,
 And in our active health do trust,
 A secret hand doth snatch us hence,
 And tumble us into the dust.

Yet carelessly we run our race
As if we could death's summons waive;
And think not on the narrow space
Between a cradle and a grave.

But since we cannot death reprove,
Our souls and fame we ought to mind,
For they our bodies will survive :
That goes beyond, this stays behind.

If I be sure my soul is safe,
And that my actions will provide
My tomb a nobler epitaph,
Than that I only lived and died,

So that in various accidents
I conscience may and honour keep :
I with that ease and innocence
Shall die, as infants go to sleep.

KATHERINE PHILLIPS.

THE ISLES OF GREECE

THE isles of Greece, the isles of Greece !
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse :
 Their place of birth alone is mute
 To sounds which echo farther west
 Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

The mountains look on Marathon—
 And Marathon looks on the sea;
 And musing there an hour alone,
 I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
 For standing on the Persians' grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
 Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
 And ships, by thousands, lay below,
 And men in nations;—all were his !
 He counted them at break of day—
 And when the sun set where were they ?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—

The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must the lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!'
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
 Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
 Of two such lessons, why forget
 The nobler and the manlier one?
 You have the letters Cadmus gave—
 Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 We will not think of themes like these!
 It made Anacreon's song divine:
 He served—but served Polycrates—
 A tyrant; but our masters then
 Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
 Oh! that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind!
 Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the Doric mothers bore;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
 They have a king who buys and sells;
 In native swords, and native ranks,
 The only hope of courage dwells:
 But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
 Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die :
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !

BYRON.

THE ATHEIST AND THE ACORN

METHINKS this world is oddly made,
And ev'ry thing's amiss,
A dull, presuming Atheist said,
As stretch'd he lay beneath a shade;
And instanced in this :

Behold, quoth he, that mighty thing,
A *Pumplin*, large and round,
Is held but by a little string,
Which upwards cannot make it spring,
Or bear it from the ground.

Whilst on this *Oak*, a fruit so small,
 So disproportion'd grows;
 That who with sense surveys this *All*,
 This universal Causal Ball,
 Its ill contrivance knows.

My better judgment would have hung
 That weight upon a tree,
 And left this mast, thus slightly strung,
 'Mongst things which on the surface sprung,
 And small and feeble be.

No more the caviller could say,
 Nor further faults descry;
 For, as he upwards gazing lay,
 An *Acorn*, loosen'd from the stay,
 Fell down upon his eye.

Th' offended part with tears ran o'er,
 As punish'd for the sin:
 Fool! had that bough a *Pumpkin* bore,
 Thy whimseys must have worked no more,
 Nor skull had kept them in.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA.

THE WORLD A GAME

THIS world a-hunting is,
The prey poor man, the Nimrod fierce is Death;
His speedy greyhounds are
Lust, sickness, envy, care,
Strife that ne'er falls amiss,
With all those ills which haunt us while we breathe.
Now, if by chance we fly
O' these the eager chase,
Old age with stealing pace
Casts up his nets, and there we panting die.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me :
Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

I

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
 By famous Hanover city;
 The River Weser, deep and wide,
 Washes its walls on the southern side;
 A pleasanter spot you never spied :
 But, when begins my ditty,
 Almost five hundred years ago,
 To see the townsfolk suffer so
 From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats !
 They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
 And bit the babies in the cradles,
 And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
 And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
 Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
 Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
 And even spoiled the women's chats,
 By drowning their speaking
 With shrieking and squeaking
 In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
 To the Town Hall came flocking :
 "'Tis clear,' cried they, 'our Mayor's a noddy;
 And as for our Corporation—shocking

To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease!
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in Council;

At length the Mayor broke silence:

'For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell—

I wish I were a mile hence!

It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—

I'm sure my poor head aches again,

I've scratched it so, and all in vain.

Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap!

Just as he said this, what should hap,

At the chamber door, but a gentle tap.

'Bless us!' cried the Mayor, 'what's that?'

(With the Corporation as he sat,

Looking little though wondrous fat;

Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister

Than a too-long-opened oyster,

Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous

For a plate of turtle green and glutinous.)

'Only a scraping of shoes on the mat!

Anything like the sound of a rat

Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!

v

'Come in!' the Mayor cried, looking bigger,
 And in did come the strangest figure!
 His queer long coat, from heel to head,
 Was half of yellow and half of red;
 And he himself was tall and thin,
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
 But lips where smiles went out and in;
 There was no guessing his kith and kin.
 And nobody could enough admire
 The tall man and his quaint attire.
 Quoth one: 'It's as if my great-grandsire,
 Starting up at the trump of Doom's tone,
 Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!'

vi

He advanced to the council table:
 And, 'Please your honours,' said he, 'I'm able,
 By means of a secret charm, to draw
 All creatures living beneath the sun,
 That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
 After me so as you never saw!
 And I chiefly use my charm
 On creatures that do people harm,—
 The mole, the toad, the newt, the viper:
 And people call me the Pied Piper.'
 (And here they noticed round his neck
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
 To match his coat of the self-same check,

And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon his pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
'Yet,' said he, 'poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I cased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?'
'One! fifty thousand!' was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stopt,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe had uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling;
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,

Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
 Cocking tails, and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens;
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
 Followed the Piper for their lives.
 From street to street he piped, advancing,
 And step for step they followed dancing,
 Until they came to the River Weser,
 Wherein all plunged and perished!
 —Save one, who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
 Swam across and lived to carry
 (As he the manuscript he cherished)
 To Rat-land home his commentary:
 Which was, ‘At the first shrill note of the pipe
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
 Into a cider-press’s gripe:
 And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
 And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
 And it seemed as if a voice
 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
 Is breathed) called out, “Oh, rats, rejoice!
 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
 So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
 Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon!”
 And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
 All ready staved, like a great sun shone
 Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
 Just as methought it said, “Come, bore me!”
 —I found the Weser rolling o’er me.’

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
'Go,' cried the Mayor, 'and get long poles!
Poke out the nests, and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!'— when suddenly 'up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, 'First, if you please, my thousand guilders!'

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow,
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
'Beside,' quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! come, take fifty!

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
 'No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
 I've promised to visit by dinner-time
 Bagdat, and accept the prime
 Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
 For having left, in the caliph's kitchen,
 Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
 With him I proved no bargain-driver;
 With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
 And folks who put me in a passion
 May find me pipe after another fashion!'

XI

'How!' cried the Mayor, 'd'ye think I'll brook
 Being worse treated than a cook?
 Insulted by a lazy ribald
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald!
 You threaten us, fellow! Do your worst;
 Blow your pipe there till you burst!'

XII

Once more he stepped into the street,
 And to his lips again
 Laid his long pipe of smooth, straight cane;
 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
 Never gave the enraptured air)
 There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,

And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scatter-
ing,
Out came the children running.
And all the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
And now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
'He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!'
When, lo, as they reached the mountain side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,

And when all were in to the very last,
 The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
 Did I say all? No! One was lame,
 And could not dance the whole of the way;
 And in after years, if you would blame
 His sadness, he was used to say—
 'It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
 I can't forget that I'm bereft
 Of all the pleasant sights they see,
 Which the Piper also promised me :
 For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
 Joining the town and just at hand,
 Where waters gushed, and fruit-trees grew.
 And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
 And everything was strange and new;
 The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
 And their dogs outran our fallow-deer,
 And honey-bees had lost their stings,
 And horses were born with eagles' wings :
 And just as I became assured
 My lame foot would be speedily cured,
 The music stopped, and I stood still,
 And found myself outside the hill,
 Left alone against my will,
 To go now limping as before,
 And never hear of that country more!'

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
 A text which says that Heaven's gate
 Ope to the rich at as easy rate

As the needle's eye takes a camel in !
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
 Wherever it was man's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
 Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and the year,
These words did not as well appear :
'And so long after what happened here
 On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six :'
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress,

On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned,
Long ago in a mighty band,
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

xv

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from
mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our
promise!

ROBERT BROWNING.

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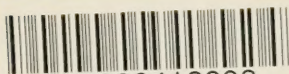
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